

## Skate Park Needs Funds to Stay Open

By SUSANNA SHEEHAN

The Duxbury skate park behind the Alden Elementary school may be closed in mid-August if more funding is not found to pay for the park monitor.

Recently, the town has begun to charge skateboarders to use the park in order to pay the weekly salary for the skate park monitor, who was required by town officials at the advice of town counsel and the town's insurance company. A resident membership costs \$100 per year and a daily pass costs \$3. So far, 52 memberships have been sold, but that has not been enough to meet the Recreation Department's goal of keeping the park open until Nov. 1.

Recreation Director Gordon Cushing estimates another \$4,000 is needed. He added that it costs about \$400 a week to keep the park open and monitors are paid an average of \$6.75 an hour.

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"We have finances to keep it open until about the second week in August," said Cushing. "If it does close, it would be closing for monetary reasons." Cushing added that the actual date for the closing is not specific.

Yet, Cushing is optimistic the money to keep the park operating will be found.

"I'm not pushing any panic buttons," he said. "We continue to sell memberships. I'm hopeful this is all going to shake out, but the people who use the skate park need to support it."

Maura Robichau, chairman of the volunteer organization, the Duxbury Skate Park Association, said her committee has been looking for ways to raise money for the park.

"We're basically in charge of keeping it afloat financially," Robichau said. "We're trying to keep the park open. None of us want to see the park close."

The committee is considering asking for a special town meeting to present the funding issue to the voters. Robichau said during the July 4th parade she and another volunteer collected signatures on a petition from skate park supporters.

"We have a tremendous amount of town support," Robichau said.

Committee members have also held a wrestling night fundraiser in May and have another planned for September. Also, they have met with Cushing and Town Manager Rocco Longo and will meet with School Superintendent Eileen Williams to discuss funding.

Longo said when he met with the Skate Park Association he told them to create a budget to be included in the Recreation Department's finances for the next fiscal year, but he added that the town "can't come up with the money right now" because the budget process concluded in early March and all funding has been allocated.

"I tried to enlighten them about the budget process," Longo said.

He added: "The town doesn't subsidize extracurricular sports," and he compared the skate park membership fees to the user fees children must pay to participate in Duxbury youth baseball and other sports.

However, Robichau feels that is not an accurate comparison.

"We're not like any other sport because we're not a specific block of time like 8 weeks for baseball. We're more like the pool. The potential is to be open 7 days 365 days a year," she said.

Robichau added: "My attitude personally is that Duxbury needs a skate park. It's an on-going venture. It's not a hula hoop; it's not going to go away. It's a sport that's here to stay."

Cushing estimated the skate park would need a \$12,000 yearly budget. That is \$10,000 for operating costs and \$2,000 for repairs and maintenance for the ramps, etc. The Recreation Department's total current budget is \$19,050.

The skate park was built 3 years ago on school property, but is owned by the town. Robichau said a "grass-roots effort" paid for the park. She estimated approximately 20-50 skateboarders use the park a day.

Skateboarders can buy memberships or blocks of daily passes at the Recreation Department in the Girl's Scout House in Hall's Corner or purchase \$3 daily passes at Millbrook Market or Benchwarmer Subs on St. George St. near the park.